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ABSTRACT

The University has a 3 part responsibility: academic excellence, research, and community service. This last responsibility tends to get short shrift in most institutions of higher learning, because an institution's excellence is generally not measured by its responsiveness to social needs. Yet, the time has come when higher education must face its responsibility for the alleviation of social ills or expect broad consequences. Community services can be provided through existing programs by using some imagination. Examples are: (1) extending the college chaplain's services to youth in the community; (2) incorporating after school, youth leadership and community projects in practice teaching assignments; (3) starting an art workshop for the neighborhood; (4) conducting workshops on social issues on a continuing basis as a problemsolving effort; (5) making community service a prerequisite for graduation; (6) making community studies a part of every student's experience and working on implementing the solutions; and (7) providing a Free University, so that people in the community who still believe in education, but have no opportunity to go to a regular college, can take advantage of the expertise available. The experience of Springfield College in Massachusetts--where professors teach for free, and students who pass a course with a C or better get a certificate--points to the great worth of such an endeavor. (AF)

Concurrent General Session I
Monday Morning, March 15

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SOME POSSIBLE RESPONSES TO SOCIAL NEEDS FROM ACADEMIA*

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Mr. Moderator, Senator Paterson, Distinguished Program Participants, ladies and gentlemen, I am pleased to speak to the subject, "Social Needs and Academic Responses" because there ought to be more attention paid these days to the third part of what some have called the three part responsibility of Higher Education. The first part is what we call Academic Excellence. That phrase must mean something because we mention it in our speeches, print it in our brochures, and chisel it in the stone over our archways. If we produce a fraction of the Academic Excellence that we talk about, this first part of our responsibility is being well attended. The second part is Research. This gets the lion's share of the soft money obtainable by Higher Education from government, industry, and foundations. Research chairs get endowed, and graduate grants, fellowships, and scholarships tend to be related to the research expectations of the source. Research is prestigious in the academic world and it sometimes seems that the more ivory tower-like it is, the more respected it is. While I admit there can never really be enough research, it is fair to say that this second part of Higher Education's responsibility is holding its own in the competition for attention and support compared to the first part, Academic Excellence, and to the third part.

The third part of our responsibility, Community Service, tends to get short shrift from most of our institutions of higher learning. This is not necessary since it could get much more attention without threat either to Academic Excellence or to Research. Should any higher education institution choose to do so, it could focus its academic, intellectual efforts on social needs. These needs can be expressed as problems which challenge the intellect and do not need to be seen only as distractions or interruptions of intellectual pursuits. Likewise, Research need not be set aside or de-emphasized until compelling problems of the community are eased, but, rather, research models can be developed which focus on the resolution of social problems. But even if such foci, reconciling Academic Excellence and Research with Community Service, were not possible, Higher Education must still face its responsibility for the alleviation of social needs or expect deep cutting consequences

Just in case you haven't noticed it, ladies and gentlemen, I haven't said anything new up to this point. However, a renewed call for attention to the responsibilities of Higher Education in Community Service, in social redress of all kinds up to the point where the society of which our institutions are a part, lives up fully to its own much publicized ideals, is needed right now. With some spectacular exceptions, most of our colleges have been in a period of remission from upheaval this year. (The date of this speech may possibly coincide with the beginni

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of the season in which this period of remission is over.) This quiet period has been good only if it has been used as an opportunity to marshal forces of a more constructive nature than those of the Sixties to achieve the same idealistic social ends which moved student populations in ways we had never before seen in this country. Unfortunately, I do not believe much such constructive re-gathering is being done, generally, on campuses. Rather, students, faculties, administrations, and trustees are finding this period of remission to be the occasion of a great engulfing nostalgia for the good old rah, rah, days when disruptions were just red-blooded, gin-soaked, American boy-type hi-jinks involving panty raids, goal posts, initiations, and sneaking a girl into the room; days when there was nothing threatening going on like linking your disruption with a social issue. Many students are unable to identify with such campy nostalgia so they hit the road in droves, many literally, more in their fantasy lives, for some kind of bucolic reflection and undefined renewal. Not a bad idea, this, but it isn't the kind of continuing constructive effort that needs to follow a decade like the sixties. May they soon return - the students, that is, not the Sixties.

Eighteen months ago I could have talked at length about the soft money projects through which the academic community can channel its expertise to help rectify social ills. These would have included the NCAA Summer Sports Program, the National Teacher Corps; Training Projects for personnel of Headstart, Peace Corps, Vista, Job Corps; summer and year-long institutes and workshops for teachers and paraprofessionals employed in programs for every imaginable category of the disadvantaged, and so forth. Despite the beneficial societal impact that can be had from Higher Education's efforts in such projects, and not because many of them do seem to have had no lasting beneficial impact, I feel I should not talk about soft money programs because for the next few years there may be so little support for them available that many colleges would feel excused, thereby, from venturing into any explicit form of response to social needs. This would be too bad because most colleges can do things in their own neighborhoods, however they define their neighborhoods, and they can do them on hard money or without money. I have decided to focus on these kinds of things and to remind you of as many as come to mind knowing that you will be able to add to the list from your own experience and that you are already doing some things that probably ought to be mentioned but won't be. Perhaps, also, you'll check to see whether your college is doing as much as it could, now that you think of it.

THE CHAPLAINCY

Do you have a full time Chaplain? Does he try to cover all duties himself or does he secure volunteer clergy representing each of the denominations to work with the students who choose them? And does this volunteer group, inevitably dubbed "The God Squad," have the collective sense to obtain, in return, from the students with whom they work, volunteer and/or paid help in the various parish programs in the community which the individual churches are unable to implement adequately with regular staff? Does your Chaplain offer student services such as, for example, draft counselling, and, if so, wouldn't it be possible to include draft age youth from the neighborhood among those eligible for the service?

PRACTICE TEACHING AND THE LIKE

Do you have an Education Department or School of Education in your college? How much do you actually expect the student to get involved in the communities where they do their practice teaching? If you allow them enough semester hour credit, you can build into the practice teaching assignment the outside school, after school, youth leadership and community problem experiences that can help an aspiring

teacher see the relationship between his chosen profession and social needs. Involving him in his student days takes advantage of his vigor, his audacity, and the fact that he can be rescued if he gets in serious trouble. If you believe that the teacher should be a community leader and if you believe that intelligent interpretation of experience is education, such an approach to the practice teaching assignment can be an academically respectable response to social needs which, by now, has not begun to be used to best advantage.

One private college[1] with which I have become familiar has tried to optimize this concept in a way which may be unfamiliar to you. It had a Division of Teacher Education which tried to teach its students that classroom competence is not enough and that the teacher ought to be a community leader as well as all that classroom competence implies. Developing the understanding that the public school systems, combined, comprise, either by design or by default, the biggest social agency in the world, and that teachers ought to prefer design to default have been two central ideas characteristic of Teacher Education at this college. In this same college there is a Community Leadership and Development Department. Its offering stresses the behavioral sciences with particular emphasis on applied behavioral sciences. It has, historically, prepared students for careers in the non-public social agencies but has recently provided ways to pursue opportunities in municipal government departments closely related to human services and in programs and projects dealing with the urban poor. One needs only to read the headlines to see how explicit has the interrelatedness of these community agencies and the public schools become; to see how housing, economic status, cultural disadvantage of both the haves and have-nots; life style, and race are related to the defacto availability or unavailability of community services including public school services. The Community Leadership and Development Department found it had something in common with Teacher Education as did, later, another department, Rehabilitation Services which focuses its high psychology content upon preparation of students for careers in rehabilitation counseling and allied services. Ultimately these three elements of community service oriented academia united in a Division of Community Education. Its aim is twofold:

1. It will find ways to produce teachers who are really community leaders who recognize how schools, with cooperation from government and non-public agencies, can respond to specific social needs and who believe it is the school's business to do so.

2. It will find ways to produce professionals in the non-public and public agencies who can lead their organizations into alliances with each other, with neighborhoods, and with the schools to bring more impact to the efforts to resolve social problems than has been possible out of the separate programs.

The new Division of Community Education is hardly two years old and has no graduates yet who started at the beginning. Therefore, evaluation of the efforts of the Division to date are speculative at best, but the idea alone was thought to be worth reporting.

THE ARTS AND URBAN PROBLEMS

Do you teach Art in your college? A girl at one of my favorite eastern colleges,[2] located on the edge of an area identified racially and economically by

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[1]Springfield College, Springfield, Mass.

[2]Ibid.

the government as a target area, believed what she had read in articles about art as an expression freeing up people with all kinds of problems related to cultural deprivation. She and a professor started a Saturday morning Art workshop for the neighborhood. She had eighty youngsters from elementary through early high school ages working in important kinds of self renewal through various art activities. They used materials she had collected from those bought by and for the regular college students but not entirely used up by them. When these ran out she canvassed the neighborhood stores and other enterprises collecting enough small donations to renew the supplies. The Saturday morning time unofficially expanded into any free-time individual youngsters could squeeze into the limited space.

Exhibit space in this college is now periodically used to exhibit the works of neighborhood artists. The young artists are still disadvantaged but in far fewer ways.

The college conceived, from this program and from the success of many non-collegiate programs using art as one medium through which to reach the alienated, an academic program, Art in Urban Life. Through this new program students may now prepare to work with disadvantaged people professionally using art as a vehicle.

STUDIES PRACTICA IN FOCUS

You may have seen brochures from various colleges advertising workshops or institutes on alcoholism, traffic control, drugs, and delinquency. Not always, but usually, these are short term efforts with little practicum and frequently they offer college credit which, when earned, is often the end of the participant's effort. Should not these and other pressing social needs like racial redress, especially, be the focus of joint problem solving efforts on a continuing basis on the part of institutions of higher education and the public and non-public agencies of the communities in which the institution finds itself? And do not these problems present sufficient challenge to test out any intellectual approach, from speculative philosophy to the scientific method? Would not well evaluated work on them by individuals be therefore academically respectable? And could not the actual college credit be withheld until pragmatic evidence illustrated the impact of the student's efforts to help resolve some social need? Cannot social needs of specific communities be the bases for a panorama of college courses, if the familiar course form is what we need to give us confidence? Where campus politics so influences decision making that proposals for formal courses are not approved when they come too close to home, cannot much be done along the same lines with Guided Individual Study or whatever you call it in your college?

SERVICE AS AN EXPECTATION

Why can't community service of some kind be an expectation, with or without college credit, that you have of each of your students before graduation? Take a look at your college seal, your letterhead mottos and your catalog slogans. It's safe to say that at least half of you will find some expression of either Christian commitment or humane service, or both, somewhere in your advertized institutional excuse for existing. A small, vigorous, struggling liberal arts college[3] that I know about would not seem to want to scare students away. Yet it requires of each

[3]Barrington College, Barrington, R.I.

student a hitch in the Community Service Corps before he can be graduated. He may not earn academic credit for the experience. Another college[4] offers two semester hours of credit for a community service course requiring a minimum of ninety hours on a project in the community which must be approved by a faculty advisor as contributing to the easement of a recognized social need. Most students continue their work long after the credit has been earned.

STUDIES IN THE COMMUNITY

A Boston newspaper a few years ago began a feature story with a description of a young person with a briefcase knocking on the door of a tenement in Roxbury. A woman answered and greeted the caller with "Where you from, B.U., Brandeis, Tufts, Northeastern or Harvard?" The story went on to tell about the greatly diminished halo effect, in fact, the disillusion, of being surveyed and studied until a student gets his academic credit and his faculty advisor gets his doctorate and then being forgotten until the next student arrives at the door. Why doesn't some college take all the data that has been collected and formulate potential solutions to the problems described therein? One answer is that probably some colleges have. What still is needed on a large scale, however, is that all colleges formulate cooperative solutions to social needs in the community of which they are a part and, further, that they participate in the practical implementation of the solutions they have developed on the theoretical level. This is academically, scientifically defensible reality testing and, with proper supervision and periodic analysis and interpretation of their experiences in the effort, students can be involved in academically legitimate ways. In short let's expand the role of higher education in community studies in two ways: 1. Let's have more of them as part of every student's experience, and, 2. Let these studies go beyond the fact gathering, descriptive stages and into the pragmatic testing of proposed solutions to social problems.

HIGHER EDUCATION AS A SOCIAL NEED

Now I'd like to tell you about Springfield Free University because if you can't do any of the other things I've suggested, you can do this and maybe do it better than it is now being done in Springfield, Massachusetts.

The neighborhood of Springfield College happens also to be the neighborhood of American International College and Springfield Technical Community College, and is not far from Western New England College. It is a poor neighborhood cited by Model Cities as a target area. Every year from this neighborhood come thirty or forty people, usually black, who still, despite everything, believe in the magic of education. They seek part-time status and want to enroll in courses but they cannot afford the direct cost of tuition plus the indirect costs of transportation, baby-sitting, time off from odd hour jobs, or for any combination of reasons cannot afford to enroll without financial aid. Financial aid for the part-timer is the most difficult to get and what is available is circumscribed by conditions which disqualify almost all aspirants. The colleges find themselves in the position of having to say "no" over and over again to people whose needs are deeply felt and whose requests do not seem, to them, unreasonable. Two men at one of the colleges thought up a scheme to give college courses to such persons without charge. It was the Springfield Free University. The idea was that if they could find a place to

[4]Springfield College, Springfield, Mass.

house classes and someone to do a little bit of administrative detail work like phoning, letter writing, advertizing, record keeping, it would probably be possible to get from the several colleges professors who would be willing to teach the neighborhood clientele on a volunteer basis. The chief entry requirement for students would be inability to pay even part time tuition at any college whose professors volunteered. Credibility of the courses would depend upon the integrity of the professor and the institution at which he was employed. The two men tried the idea out on Mr. Louis Frayser, who was at the time the Executive Director of the Springfield Action Commission. He liked it, adopted it, and assigned it to Mr. Leonard Lockley, Director of Northern Educational Services which is one of the activities of the Springifeld Action Commission. Contacts with the various colleges were made and publicity released. Arrangements for five college level classes were made for the summer of 1970. About fifteen or twenty students were expected to show up at an orientation meeting at Springfield Action Commission headquarters. One hundred and thirty were there. They sorted themselves out, started classes with four professors from Springfield College and one from American International College, complained about too little administration, sweltered through ten to fifteen weeks of summer depending on the course and many passed the courses with a "C" or better. Those achieving a "C" or better received a letter from the professor on Springfield Free University letterhead stationery (it is typed letterhead, not printed. Remember the "Free" in "Free University" in this case means "no charge." Therefore no expense could be incurred which could not be absorbed by some other department). The letter read as in the following fictitious sample:

SPRINGFIELD FREE UNIVERSITY

Mr. John Jones has completed the course in English 2: Composition with a grade of B at Springfield Free University.

I, Edward Jacke Cooper, Professor of English at Springfield College hereby certify that I have held the above named student to the same standard for the same grade as that to which I hold the students in classes at my home campus.

Signed: Edward Jacke Cooper
Professor of English
Springfield College

Signed: Leonard Lockley, Director
Northern Educational Services

Since Springfield Free University uses no professors who are not employed by accredited colleges, to challenge the above letter as a credential, for whatever purpose it may be presented, is to challenge the integrity of the professor and the institution employing him.

Students not earning a "C" or better do not receive a letter of any kind to use as a credential but are counseled as to what their next step ought to be. Whatever that step turns out to be, they are not burdened by a recorded "F" from a university which does not even aspire to accredited status of its own.

Because the administration of the Springfield Free University turned out to be a collection of chiefs with full time responsibilities for an assortment of other sensitive programs, the Fall term of classes was sparse and it looked as though the idea was going to fade away leaving behind some stray pieces of stationery. However, the combined chiefs were able to recruit a brave by the name of Tony Petrillo who

wanted to see if he could, as a student in the Community Leadership and Development major at Springfield College, pull together the loose ends and get the enterprise going again. It turned out that he could. He not only recruited professors for five more classes but found classrooms that banks, libraries, and churches were willing to donate since the Springfield Action Commission was beginning to feel that SFU should pay for lights, heat, and security guards, and since SFU could not pay, it needed to move.

It is too early to say whether this attempt on the part of individuals from the colleges to serve a social need in the neighborhood will have ary lasting beneficial impact. Feedback so far indicates some things, however.

1. It has symbolic, morale boosting value in the community.

2. Registrars in several colleges have said they can see no legitimate way to refuse the credits as transfer credits if any of the Free University students find they can enter a tuition charging institution later.

3. Some business enterprises, which understand the difficulty that economically disadvantaged members of a racial minority have in obtaining familiar types of credentials to justify their employment in certain jobs, are happy to have the aforementioned letter to copy and file.

4. A few students who could not afford a losing venture into higher education found they were not losers and now are willing to make the sacrifices necessary to pay tuition at an established college.

5. Professors desperately innovating, scrounging, and praying to find ways of serving the variety of students who turn up in the Free University classes have found they can serve their regular students better as a result of the experience.

Ladies and Gentlemen, there is no problem of plagiarism here, no copyright problems, no patent rights. The Springfield Free University invites you to copy and improve. If Springfield Free University suddenly becomes the least impressive of twenty or thirty "no charge" universities in the country, it will have done a good job.

I have enjoyed reviewing some of these ideas with you and appreciate your willingness to hear me out. May I close by saying that if we act out explicitly the ideals to be found in our own college seals, our own institution's stated philosophies, our own catalog phrases, there will be those who think all hell is breaking loose but all it will really signify is that we are giving appropriate attention to our third responsibility, community service - our response to social needs.